United Nations

Press Release

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General welcomes agreement between Popular Movement for Liberation of Angola and National Union for Total Independence of Angola on cessation of hostilities.

- Secretary-General expresses "deep distress" at cyclone in Bangladesh, which has caused extensive loss of life as well as widespread damage to infrastructure and economy.

- Chief Military Observer of United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission formally welcomes observers in Kuwait City.

- Secretary-General recommends that Security Council extend mandate of United Nations Observer Group in Central America for another six months until 7 November; force's strength to be reduced.

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Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar has welcomed the agreement reached in Lisbon yesterday between the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) for the cessation of hostilities and a peaceful transition in the country.

Through his spokeswoman today, the Secretary-General congratulated the parties for their statemanship which, he said, made possible the finalization of the agreement. He urged all concerned to cooperate fully in order to expedite the implementation of the agreement to ensure a lasting peace in Angola.

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The Secretary-General has appealed to the international community for a generous response to the plight of Bangladesh, whose entire coast was hit by a severe storm on Tuesday, 30 April, killing thousands of people and affecting approximately 15 million others.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The Secretary-General expressed "deep distress" at the news and has already expressed his condolences and sympathy to the Government and people of Bangladesh.

According to a United Nations report, already established refugee centres in Bangladesh were able to house a large number of the population whose lives were therefore spared. Also, the early-warning system put in place rendered possible the evacuation of millions of people from the most exposed areas before the cyclone actually struck. Several stockpiles of emergency goods have been established in Bangladesh, with the assistance of the United Nations organizations.

The United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) has dispatched a high-level team to Dhaka which will be joined by a team of communications experts put at the disposal of UNDRO by the Swiss Government. Some essential relief goods such as emergency health kits, originating from the World Health Organization (WHO), have already been sent to the affected area. In Dhaka itself, the United Nations Resident Coordinator has constituted a United Nations emergency group to assist the Government in its relief efforts.

The UNDRO will concentrate its emergency efforts on drawing up, with the Government, a precise picture of damage and of needs. Priority needs will be to clear the roads, re-establish power, restore telecommunication facilities and provide food rations for people stuck in refugee centres.

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Major General Gunther Griendl, Chief Military Observer of the United Nations Iraq Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), formally welcomed the observer team today in Kuwait City. He said peace-keeping was not only a matter of skill and professionalism, but also a matter of attitude. He urged the troops to be fair, firm and friendly and called on them to report facts accurately and without bias, and to show respect for the people of Iraq and Kuwait and their customs.

Major Griendl said he was proud to have under his command military observers and units from 36 nations, including for the first time observers from the five permanent members of the Security Council.

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The Secretary-General has recommended that the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) remain stationed in the area for another six months, until the first week of November.

In a report to the Security Council dated 29 April, he said he was convinced that ONUCA continued to make a valuable contribution to the peace process in Central America. The Force is monitoring activities along the borders to verify the cessation of aid to insurrectionist movements and the non-use of the territory of one country for attacks on others.

(more)

For the next six months, the Secretary-General proposed that the Group be reduced from 187 military observers to a total of 130 and that the Central American countries provide rent-free office space to the Group to cut costs.

The ONUCA has been responsible for overseeing the demobilization of the Nicaraguan opposition movement since November 1989.

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